DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 011 CS 208 049

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TITLE Teaching the Resume: A Method.
PUB DATE Mar 83
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (34th, Detroit, MI, March 17-19, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Education Work Relationship; Higher Education; Job Applicants; Job Search Methods; Job Skills; Persuasive Discourse; *Teaching Methods; Technical Writing; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Audience Awareness; Persona; *Resumes; Theory Practice Relationship

ABSTRACT

To create successful job resumes, students must consider carefully the rhetorical elements of audience, persona, meaning, and text. Students can begin tailoring the resume to their own needs by completing a worksheet listing work experience, educational history and other relevant details. Using the worksheet helps students focus on the audience, consider the image they wish to project, and determine for which professional level their work and educational background are best suited. After listing essential information, students can both describe career objectives, certification, education, and work experience and create an applicant persona by listing such information as honors and awards, professional organizations, and interests and hobbies. After listing personal data such as a statement of health, willingness to relocate, marital status, and any special skills that might be valuable to a prospective company, students should conclude with at least three work or education related references. They can avoid inappropriate meaning by keeping career objectives reasonable, avoiding nicknames, and listing all possible phone numbers at which they can be reached. Finally, students should consider the overall appearance of the resume on the page, the use of margins and white space, and the effects of boldface, italic type, and underlining. (The resume worksheet and a sample resume are included.) (HTH)

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TEACHING THE RESUME: A METHOD

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New Mexico State University

Teaching the resume as a pedogogical tool offers students practical experience that 1) may help them to get a job and 2) may help them develop rhetorical skills they can apply to other writing tasks. Specifically, this paper focuses on the resume as a rhetorical problem, a problem consisting of the elements of audience, persona, meaning, and text. By emphasizing these concepts, students can plan their resumes intelligently and with a clear sense of their audience rather than merely copying a resume format which appears attractive to them.

To help students individually tailor their resumes to their own needs, I begin by having students fill out a Worksheet/Checklist which calls for a complete history of work experience and education as well as other relevant details.

The Worksheet/Checklist, because it requires students to list all the details of their work experience, their education, and other pertinent information ensures that no important details are left out. In addition, it eliminates the possibliity that some students would omit or deprecate some of their experience, a tendency particularly true of the older returning student. Selectivity, as I point out frequently, can come later as the resume takes shape. A copy of this Worksheet/Checklist follows:

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RESUME CHECKLIST WORKSHEET

Before beginning to fill out your information checklist/work, evaluate which of the following groups you best fit into:

Group A Young Professional--age 22 to 30; some experience, related or otherwise; post-high school, college, and/or graduate school

Group B Middle Professional--age 30 to 45; extensive work experience, post-high school education

Group C Executive Professional--age 30 to 45; highly specialized work experience; high school, college, and/or graduate training.

Next, keep in mind which image, A, B, or C, you wish to project to prospective employers as you fill in the following blocks:

NAME, ADDRESSES, AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Write your full name or the name you wish to be known by professionally. (Avoid nicknames)

Name

List all addresses and telephone numbers at which you can be reached: home, school, place of employment.

Addresses

Telephone Numbers

FIELD, PROFESSIONAL OR CAREER OBJECTIVE

Choose the word "field" as your heading, if you belong either to Group B or C and have some professional work experience. State your "professional objective" or "career objective," if you have recently graduated from college or graduate school.

Field, Professional or Career Objective

CERTIFICATION

List any licensing or certification related to professional objectives. If certification is unrelated, list in Personal Data with other special skills.

Certification

EXPERIENCE

Fill in experience block on your resume first, if you belong to Group B or C. Begin with the education block on your resume first, if you belong to Group A. Separate experience related to your career objective from unrelated experience and list these positions first with the most recent position listed first. State job title, years worked, company name and location. For job duties, listing three is generally adequate. Now list other job experience, if you have no job experience related to your professional career goal. Use the back of your worksheet, if you need additional room.

Related Job Experience

Other Job Experience

EDUCATION

List graduate education first, the degree obtained and the years attended, or, if no degree was obtained, list graduate school and years attended. Next list the name of the school, the place, and the major and minor fields. Follow the same format for the undergraduate degree and high school.

Education

AWARDS, HONORS, ORGANIZATIONS

List all awards and honors first. Give the name of the award; the year it was given, a brief explanation of the award; the school name and location, if awarded at a school. List organizational offices held if they are connected with professional and community service organizations. List the offices held in social organizations last. Next list membership in organizations. List the professional organizations first; school name and location, if affiliated with a school. Social organizations are listed last. State name of organization (a brief explanation if not self-explanatory) and years of membership.

INTERESTS, HOBBIES, TRAVEL

List all interests, hobbies, and activities. (Deletion can come later with analysis of career goals.)

Interests, Hobbies, Travel

PERSONAL DATA

List health, willingness to relocate, any special skills which might be valuable to a prospective company. List marital status if single for a woman, married for a male.

Personal Data

REFERENCES

List at <u>least</u> three related work experience or work experience supervisors and/or college or graduate school professors. Make certain there is a <u>complete</u> mailing address and that the <u>professional</u> address is listed, not the home or personal address.

References

Audience

The Worksheet/Checklist helps students focus on the rhetorical tool of audience by asking them to consider their audience and the image they wish to project. Analyzing one's audience can help students decide whether Group A (Young Professional--age 22 to 30; some experience, related or otherwise; high school, college, and/or graduate school); Group B (Middle Professional--age 30 to 45, extensive work experience, post-high school education); Group C (Executive Professional--age 30 to 45; highly specialized work experience; post-high school, college, and/or graduate training) best fits their work background and education.

In focusing on audience and what that audience needs to know, I suggest students first list their name; address or addresses, and the telephone numbers at which they can be reached.

After this essential information is listed, applicants should list their Field or their Professional or Career Objective. I suggest this category because many employers wish to see this on a resume.

Certification, if related to the applicant's Professional Objective, should be the next category because it answers the prospective employer's questions about an applicant's qualifications.

The Education and Work Experience categories are filled out after the Certification category because a prospective employer is most interested in an applicant's education and work experience. Determining which goes first will depend upon the group (A,B, or C) to which the applicant belongs.

If work experience is listed before education, a job title is given, the years worked, company name, and location should be included in the experience block, as well as three job duties.

Education is next with the graduate education listed first, the degree obtained, the years attended or, if no degree was obtained, the name of school

and the years attended. Following the name of the school is the school's location and the major and minor fields. This same format is followed for the undergraduate degree and high school.

Once applicants list their name, address, phone number, career objective, certification, work experience and education, the audience's, that is, the prospective employer's, immediate questions about an applicant's qualifications have been answered. The students can now consider how best to create a positive persona.

Persona

The categories which contribute most obviously to building a sense of the person behind the resume or persona are the following categories: Awards, Honors, Organizations; Interests, Hobbies, Travel; Personal Data; and References.

Awards, Honors, and Organizations go before Interests, Hobbies, and Travel because the Awards category contributes most heavily to a professional image, signifying recognition from colleagues, peers, or professional organizations. The name of the award should be listed first, followed by a brief explanation of the award if not self-explanatory; the year it was awarded; and the school name (if awarded at a school) and location.

Organizational offices, if they are connected with professional and community service organizations, are listed next. These are followed by social organizations. The office is listed first, followed by the years the office was held, the name of the organization and its location.

Finally, membership in organizations are listed, with the professional organizations coming before the social organizations. With both professional and social organizations, the organizational name is given first with a brief

explanation of the organization if not self-explanatory; the years of membership; and the school name and location, if affiliated with a school.

Interests, Hobbies, Travel follow the Awards, Honors, Organizations category. I encourage students to list all their interests and their hobbies, for this category also contributes strongly to the applicant's persona.

Personal Data generally contains a statement of health, willingness to relocate, marital status, and any special skills which might be valuable to a prospective company, such as second languages.

The last category, References, should have a least three references which are from work supervisors or from college or graduate school professors.

Meaning

Having analyzed the concepts of audience and persona and listed all the information which best contributes to these concepts, I then ask students to evaluate the information they have listed on their Checklist/Worksheet and decide which material is appropriate for their resumes. Suggestions and possible pitfalls are incorporated in the Worksheet/Checklist to help students focus on the most inappropriate meaning.

I urge students to avoid nicknames on resumes and to list all addresses and telephone numbers at which they can be reached. Positions have been lost because employers have not been able to contact an applicant.

In the Field, Professional or Career Objective, I note which terms are most appropriate to use and caution students against overly ambitious career objectives such as Vice-President since that could be viewed negatively.

If certification is unrelated to the applicant's professional objective, I suggest it be listed in Personal Data with others special skills.

In the Experience category, I recommend that experience which is related to the applicant's career objective should be grouped together and listed

before non-related experience. In brief, chronology should be broken when it does not serve the applicant's best interest.

In the Education category, I suggest including one's high school, since many employers wish to see the high school included. Obviously, if the applicant is a mature person, this recommendation would not apply.

Awards, Honors, Organizations should be listed before Interests, Hobbies, Travel or Personal Data because they confer a more professional image than the latter two categories.

For Interests, Hobbies, Travel, I suggest students carefully review the content of this section and delete hobbies which suggests passivity for women (such as crocheting) or sky-diving which suggests excessive aggressiveness for men. I encourage the listing of moderately vigorous hobbies such as tennis or swimming. In addition, I point out that being married, for a man, is positive while being married for a female is negative because it might suggest an unwillingness to relocate. Students need to be aware of these nuances when determining what goes into their resumes.

The important points to note about the content in the Reference Category is that there should be at least three references which have complete/and professional addresses.

Text

Having considered audience, persona, and meaning, students are then encouraged to look at textual consideration. Under text, applicants consider such issues as margins, how the resume looks on the page, avoiding too much trapped white space, and effect of bold face and italics. I offer my own resume as an example of these considerations.

ELIZABETH BRETTE MONACLE

Department of English
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003
Business Phone: 646-2240

1826 Webster Avenue
Las Cruces,
New Mexico 88001
Home Phone: (505) 523-4441

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE: FACULTY POSITION IN TECHNICAL WRITING

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor - New Mexico State University - 1976 to Present
Technical Writing
Business Writing
English Composition
English Review (Remedial English)

Instructor - Army Education Center, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico (College of Continuing Education, New Mexico State University) - 1980
English Composition
Technical Writing

Instructor - University of Texas at EL Paso - 1976
English Composition

TECHNICAL WRITER/EDITOR EXPERIENCE

Technical Writer/Editor - New Mexico State University - ERIC/CRESS (Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse/Clearinghouse for Rural Education and Small Schools) - 1977 to 1979
contacted authors
requested bibliographic searches
edited rough and final publication
wrote and rewrote sections as needed
arranged for typing of publication
contacted artists and selected art work for covers and illustrations
worked as liaison between author and publisher/printer

Graduate School Editor (Part-time) - New Mexico State University - 1980
responsible for editing scientific and humanistic theses and dissertations from five colleges

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Trade-Offs Unlimited, Las Cruces, New Mexico business. Edited the company's directory, procedures manual, and periodical newsletter to the company's business associates, 1982.

Retreat on University-Industry Relations: New Mexico State University Las Cruces, New Mexico, February 4-5, 1982. A Report with Conclusions and Recommendations by the University-Industrial Alliance Task Force, April 1982.

Edited Affirmative Action Proposal for the City of Truth or Consequences.

Edited numerous theses and dissertations on a private consultant basis.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Program in Composition/Linguistics
University of New Mexico

Master of Arts Degree in Technical Writing (Candidate)
New Mexico State University - 1984 expected date for degree

Master of Arts Degree in Literature
New Mexico State University

Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Business
Marymount Manhattan College, New York

Certification for Secondary Education
New Mexico State University

PUBLICATIONS

"Using the Computer To Teach Grammar and Mechanics in a Technical Writing Course." This paper, jointly authored by E. Brette Monagle and O. Jane Allen, was submitted at the invitation of the editor of Technical Communication Journal of the Society for Technical Communication.

"Helping Students See Themselves Through Their Resumes" ERIC/Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. ERIC number unassigned as yet.

"Helping Individuals Sell Themselves Through Their Resumes" Proceedings of the 30th International Technical Communication Conference, St. Louis, MO, May 1-4, 1983. Society for Technical Communication.

"Teaching the Resume: A Method" ERIC/Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. ERIC number unassigned as yet.

"Error Pattern Analysis Applied to Technical Writing: An Editor's Guide to Writers." ERIC/Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. ERIC number unassigned as yet.

"Error Pattern Analysis in a Workshop Format." ERIC/Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. ERIC number unassigned as yet.

"In Search of Cinderella: A Comma Heuristic that Really Works." Freshman Resource Notes (FERN). Forthcoming.

"Error Pattern Analysis in a Workshop Format." Proceedings of the 29th International Technical Communication Conference, Boston, MA, May 5-8, 1982. Society for Technical Communication.

"Error Pattern Analysis Applied to Technical Writing: An Editor's Guide to Writers." Proceedings of the 28th International Technical Communication Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, May 20-23, 1981. Society for Technical Communication.

More Minority Women in Research and in Education: A Report of Dallas Conference on Expanding the Role of Women. Dallas, TX, 1978. National Institute of Education.

A Bibliography of the Rural Women. Women's Equity Group - Far West Labs, 1978.

PAPERS PRESENTED

"Helping Students Sell Themselves Through Their Resumes." Presented at the 30th International Technical Communication Conference, St. Louis, MO, May 1-4, 1983. Society for Technical Communication.

"Teaching the Resume: A Method." Presentation for 34th Annual Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Detroit, MI, March 17-19, 1983.

"Teaching Mechanics in Composition Class." Presentation for the New Mexico Council for Teachers of English at Albuquerque, NM, September 24-25, 1982.

"Error Pattern Analysis in a Workshop Format." Presented at the 29th International Technical Communication Conference, Boston, MA, May 5-8, 1982. Society for Technical Communication.

"Error Pattern Analysis Applied to Technical Writing: An Editor's Guide to Writers." Presented at the 28th International Technical Communication Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, May 20-23, 1981. Society for Technical Communication.

PROFESSIONAL OFFICES

Vice-President, Society for Technical Communication, Rio Grande Chapter, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1982-1983.

HONORARIES

Biographee, Who's Who in the West

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Business Communication Association
Association of Professional Writing Consultants
Association of Teachers of Technical Writing
Conference on College Composition and Communication
National Council of Teachers of English
New Mexico Council of Teachers of English
Society for Technical Communication

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Attended the following conferences and educational exchanges:

Society for Technical Communication Conference, St. Louis, MO, May 1-4, 1983.

Conference on College Composition and Communication, Detroit, MI, March 17-19, 1983.

Scientific-Educational Exchange, Official Guest of the China Association for Science and Technology and sponsored jointly by the Sino American Council, Detroit, MI, May 25-June 9, 1982.

(technical and business writing seminars were given at universities, colleges, and trade institutes in Beijing, Nanjing, Yangchow, Zhenjiang, Wuxi, and Shanghai)

Society for Technical Communication Conference, Boston, MA, May 5-8, 1982.

Conference on College Composition and Communication, San Francisco, CA, March 18-20, 1982.

Fifth Annual Conference on the Teaching of Writing, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM, February 12, 1982.

New Mexico State Conference on Women's Studies, Las Cruces, NM, November 6-7, 1981.

American Business Communication Association Convention. Phoenix, AZ, October 14-17, 1981.

Society for Technical Communication Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, May 20-23, 1981.

INTERESTS

Writing: particularly short stories and novels
Travel: France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Denmark, Spain, England, Ireland, Scotland, Italy, Switzerland, Iceland, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, Dominican Republic

PERSONAL DATA

Health: Excellent.

Willing to relocate.

REFERENCES

Dr. Patricia Meszaros
Department Head
Department of English
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

Dr. Joseph Lanadil
Department of English
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131

Dr. O. Jane Allen
Department of English
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

Conclusion

By using the rhetorical tools of audience, persona, content, and text in conjunction with a Worksheet/Checklist, students begin to see that they can use these tools for resumes and for other writing tasks in college and the world of work.